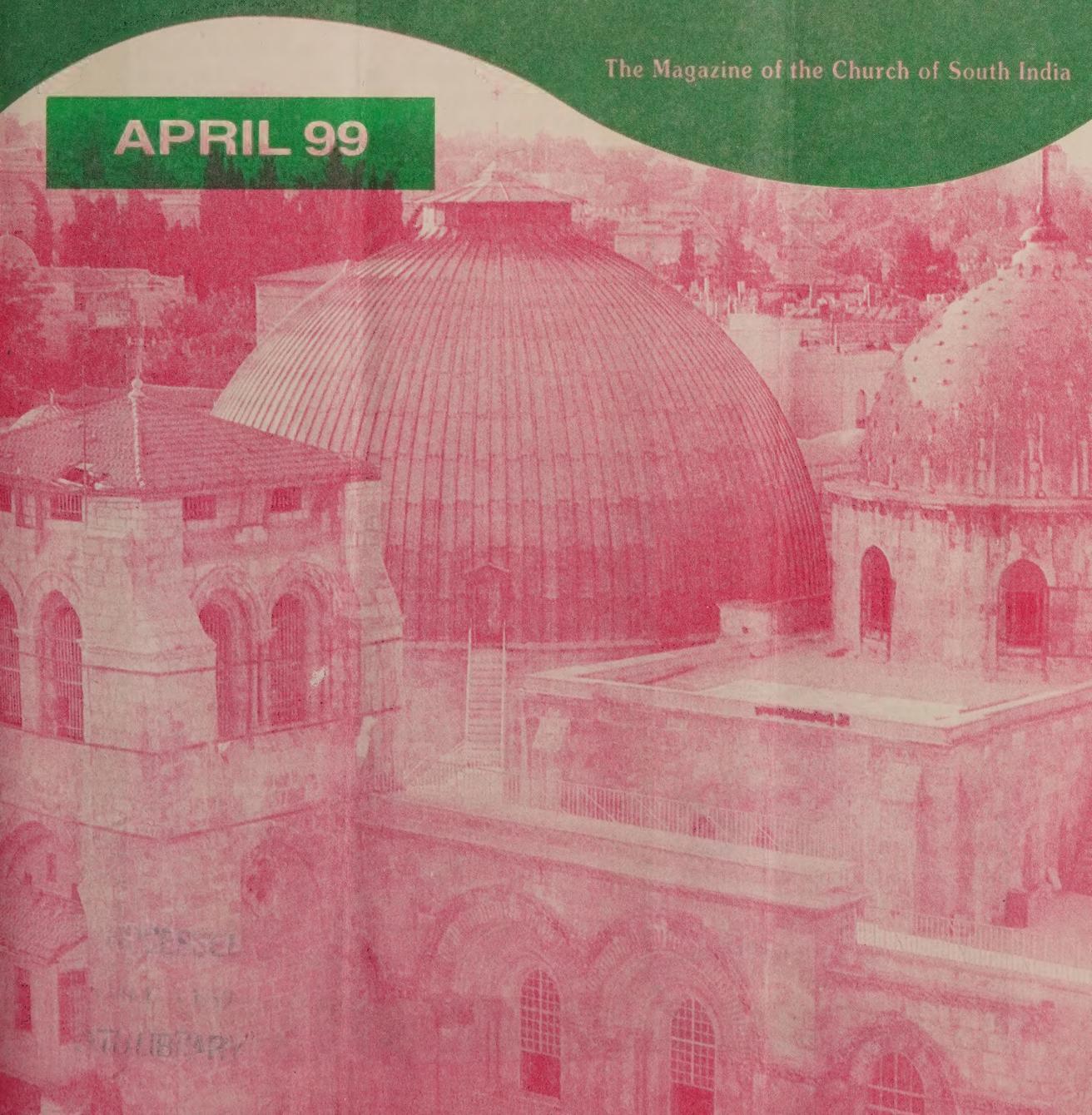




# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

**APRIL 99**



**THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH  
APRIL 1999**

Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion. The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed (**John R.W.Stott**)

The resurrection that awaits us beyond physical death will be but the glorious consummation of the risen life which already we have in Christ. (**D.T.Niles**)

Life alone can impart Life. (**Ralph W.Emerson**)

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime. (**Martin Luther**)

It is also stated that after his execution and entombment he disappeared entirely. Some people actually assert that he had risen; others report that his friends stole him away. I for one cannot decide where the truth lies. (**Josephus**)

Christ has conquered death, not only by suppressing its evil effects, but by reversing its sting. By virtue of the Resurrection, nothing any longer kills inevitably but everything is capable of becoming the blessed touch of the divine hands, the blessed influence of the will of God upon our lives. However compromised by our faults, or however cast down by circumstances our position may be, we can at any moment, by a total redressment, wholly readjust the world around us and take up our lives again in a favourable sense. To those who love God, all things are turned to good. (**Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**)

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**THE SOUTH INDIA  
CHURCHMAN**

*The Magazine of the Church of South India*

**APRIL 1999**

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## When will our country awake?

What has been happening in the last ten days or so is really sickening. The 1998 electoral verdict was of course a fractured verdict but when the prime minister Mr. Vajpayee took the reins with his innumerable allies the country indeed heaved a sigh of relief. India was promised 'a stable government and an able prime minister' but right from day one there was many a hiccup. It was quite clear that the lady from the Poes Garden, Chennai would never let anyone forget that she was the boss. Every now and then she put up unreasonable and impossible demands and every time it was a pathetic sight to see Mr. Vajpayee trying to please her conceding her unreasonable demands. One after another her demands were acceded to. It was indeed a policy of appeasement. But there were still one or two things like dismissing the DMK government in Tamilnadu led by Mr. M. Karunanidhi which no self respecting government or party could accept which the imperious lady from Poes Gardens could not brook. She was just biding her time. Her sister from the North Ms. Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress from West Bengal was also pulling the Vajpayee government in another direction. Atlast the opportunity that Jayalalitha was looking for arrived with the unprecedented dismissal of the Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Bhagwat and the political maverick Mr. Subramaniam Swamy who had been nursing a grudge against Mr. Vajpayee who refused to make him his finance minister lost no time in making a political capital out of it. Once again Jayalalitha went to Mr. Vajpayee with a list of impossible demands including the constitution of a joint parliamentary committee to probe the unprecedented sacking of the naval chief, this time joining hands,

with the BJP's *bête noire* the Congress-I. It was obvious that her criticism was not against the defence minister Mr. George Fernandes whom she wanted to be shifted to a less sensitive ministry but a well-planned, camouflaged deliberate attack on the BJP government. Mr. Subramaniam Swamy was not the one to let the opportunity slip through his fingers and he organized the now famous 'tea party' which brought Sonia Gandhi and Jayalalitha together and brought about in the words of the naive Jayalalitha 'a political earthquake' when in fact the whole country was grieving the devastating earthquake which ravaged Chamoli in U.P.

There were dramatic changes from April 12 in the political scene in New Delhi with Congress-I and AIADMK, BJP and DMK and other allies issuing a statement hour by hour leading to the exciting finale on April 15 when the

### A VIEW FROM THE PEW

parliament met again after a recess for the budget session. Meanwhile the AIADMK withdrew support to the BJP government which made the president Mr. K.R. Narayanan promptly direct the BJP government to seek a vote of confidence and in a final showdown the BJP government lost by a whisker of just one vote. Once again in the political game of Ducks and Drakes we are back to square one because of the overarching unmasked self-interests and bloated egos and tantrums of the leading political dramatis personae masquerading under the garb of 'national interests'.

Can the Congress form a stable government with just 140 MPs and the allies pulling in different directions, the only commonality among them being their hatred for BJP? Already some of them have gone on record to say that they do

not want to support a Congress-I government. Just a couple of days back India was told that an alternative government would be in place within a minute and now even after four days there seems to be no meaningful progress in government formation. Again there is a spectre of instability haunting India with all its financial and economic repercussions. Does India deserve all this? *When will our country awake?*

\*\*\*\*\*

Last week I had been on a visit to South Kerala and East Kerala dioceses in connection with the Kerala Regional Youth Assembly which was held in Kottayam and the inauguration of the bicentenary celebrations of the CMS. It was an exciting event offering immense hope for fellowship and affirmation of our unity that transcends all barriers. My visit to Melukavu turned out to be a pilgrimage of faith and I was absolutely overwhelmed by awe and utter humility. It was unbelievable that the illustrious trio of CMS, Henry Baker, Benjamin Bailey and John Venn could do so much of pioneering work in such interior villages under trying circumstances and minimal conveniences and comforts. It inspired me and made me feel utterly humble. I couldn't help feeling a little guilty of our inadequacies these days to the task that is set before us with so much of comforts and convenience all around us. As I stood before the Meukavu cathedral in the company of bishop the Rt. Rev. K.J. Samuel, the consciousness swept over me that we were standing on hallowed grounds. What a rich heritage we have entered into for which we have to be most thankful to God. Let us own this priceless heritage and march forward to own the millennium and the church. \*

## *A Word From your General Secretary*

At the outset I would like to inform the church about the ghastly accident of Mrs.Selvabai Thavaraj, wife of Bishop Thavaraj of Madurai-Ramnad diocese and her daughter along with the driver which claimed their lives on 19-4-1999 leaving the bishop, his son-in-law and the grandson in deep grief. This is the time that the whole church must uphold the bereaved bishop and the diocese in our prayers that God alone must console them with his comforting touch.

This month has witnessed the retirement of two stalwarts of the CSI in the persons of the Rt.Rev.Dr. Vasant P.Dandin and the Rt.Rev.Dr.Masilamani Azariah, the former Moderator and Bishop in KND and former General Secretary and Bishop in Madras Diocese respectively. We thank God for their committed life and witness in His vineyard.

200 years ago the Church Missionary Society sent a small group of committed persons to proclaim the Gospel to some places such as Tirunelveli, Madhya Kerala and combined Dornakal Dioceses. Their contribution to the church was so significant that their labour can be seen today in the shape of the dioceses like Madhya Kerala, East Kerala, North Kerala; Tirunelveli, Tiruchirapalli - Thanjavur, Madurai and Madras; Dornakal, Krishna-Godavari and Karimnagar. Similar work also can be seen among scattered congregations in cities like Bangalore, and Hyderabad. A couple of years ago we celebrated the bi-centenary of LMS. As the years pass by we remember the great

contribution of these missions whenever we celebrate the work of the other missions.

My visit to Europe helped me to renew the CSI relationship with all our related churches and the



**Ecumenical Resource Sharing Agencies.** I am happy to say that the Communication Department is going to be strengthened from the resources assured from EMW and WACC which will benefit the dioceses.

By the time this magazine reaches you our nation may possibly have an alternative government in the midst of utter confusion, but with a sigh of relief for the church which hopes an alternative government to be formed will ensure protection of all citizens including minorities.

Meanwhile we had an opportunity to honour at the CSI Centre the Robinsons who have served the CSI Hospital at Chickbalapur for a number of years. They are leaving for Scotland for good.

I am also very happy to inform the selection of the Rev.Dr. V.Devasahayam as the Bishop designate in the diocese of Madras whose consecration, God

willing, will be held on the 2nd of May 1999. We wish him well and pray that the Madras Diocese may have a time of thanksgiving with the new bishop.

I also request the church to pray for the proper choice of the spiritual head in Karnataka Northern Diocese where the panel is already available to us. We also pray for the Vellore diocese which is making preparation for the selection of the panel. We continue to pray for the diocese of North Kerala that the Spirit of God may guide the leaders and the pastors of these Dioceses.

A team of youngsters representing Asia Volunteer Centre from Osaka, Japan visited us under the leadership of Rev.Satoshi Hirata.

It is a matter of joy to congratulate Rev.Dr.Daniel S.Thiagaraja who has been selected to be the Executive Secretary for Mission and Evangelism of the Christian Conference of Asia representing CSI after Dr.Dhyanand Carr retired from this to take charge as the Principal of Tamilnadu Theological Seminary.

This is also an appropriate time to congratulate the Rt.Rev.Dr.J.W.Gladstone who has been chosen as the President of the Senate of Serampore. I hope and pray that under his leadership Theological Education in India would become more meaningful and relevant in the changing times.

Our national scene calls for our incessant prayers. We are summoned to pray for our nation with earnestness for stable governance.

*Rev. G. Dyasiruadam*

# A CONVOCATION ADDRESS

- Dr. Robin Boyd

Dr. Robin Boyd is a household name among all students of theology. His 'Introduction to Indian Christian Theology' was a path-breaking book. As a student of theology I found it very stimulating and inspiring. His address at the Senate of Serampore convocation which he delivered on February 6, 1999 at Chennai is equally challenging and inspiring. Part of it is reproduced here as I felt our readers too must have the benefit of being challenged and inspired. - Ed.

## To Christ through the Vedanta : Yes or No?

The now classical expressions of christian theology in categories derived from Sankhara, Ramanuja and others and historically stem largely from Keshub Chander Sen and Brahmapandab Upadhyaya has become well known in the West through such writers as Griffiths and Swami Abhishiktananda, as well as through purely western authors like Bishop John Robinson. Indeed there is an influential school of spirituality indirectly derived from this tradition by the Irish Benedictine monk John Main. This is perhaps the best known example in the West of a definitely Christian Indian Sadhana, and include Bede Griffiths himself among its advocates. A current practitioner is the President of Ireland, Mr. Marry Mc Aleese.

The detailed hermeneutic of this marga continues very strongly in India; I need mention only Serampore's own Dr. K.P. Aleaz. Having read some of his work I realise how minimalist and naïve my own writing has been, for example on the pramanas. I believe it is essential that this work should proceed.

So, what of the charge of elitism, and of irrelevance in face of the problems of India's 200 million dalits and adivasis? Is it

a waste of time - a blasphemy even - to pursue this expression of theology, of Brahminical theology if you like in face of the suffering of the oppressed?

I do not think it is. Everyone in the world has a right to hear the good news of the gospel, and to understand it. And if there are people whose cultural - linguistic background - to use George Lindbeck's terminology - is that of Vedanta, then the gospel needs to be expounded in those terms. People in western countries who have become bored with traditional Christianity, and in their postmodern eclecticism have turned to a variety of Hindu based spiritualities, can be "surprised by joy" to find a Christian spirituality in the new language they have learned. The influence of "ashram theology" is not limited to India.

## A Conversion over our heads?

So theology of this kind is a task to which Indian theologians may well continue to devote themselves; and all the more so because of what I see as a very real threat to Indian Christian theology. That threat is the tendency for western philosophers of religion to presume to hold a dialogue (sometimes perhaps developing into an ivory tower monologue) with the other great world-faiths like Hinduism, over the heads of

the christian church and its theologians in the country concerned, which is usually India. It is, perhaps, not unfair to see this tendency as a sort of interfaith globalisation, where the beliefs and wishes of the local inhabitants are not consulted. I would mention the work of such pluralist writers as John Hick, Paul Knitter and Keith Ward. To give only one example, Keith Ward, in *A Vision to pursue; beyond the Crisis in Christianity* (SCM, 1991), has a chapter on "Christian Vedanta" in which he mentions Radhakrishnan; Aurobindo and Vivekananda, as well as John Robinson, Thomas Merton and Bede Griffiths. But the only writer of Indian Christian origins whom he mentions is Raimundo Panikkar, despite the fact that many Indian Christian theologians have written on the subject, and that is one of them, Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai, actually wrote a Khristopanishad, and pioneered the use of the term Khristadvaita. The Christian Vedanta Ward outlines is a creation of his own without reference to the Indian Christian tradition.

## A flattened Christology

The danger in this type of dialogue is, I believe, that such writers, in their laudable anxiety to be fair and conciliatory to Hinduism as they understand it,

tend to flatten Christology. Jesus of Nazareth is no problem so long as he is simply a prophetic figure, or an icon of redemptive human suffering: when he becomes the second person of the Trinity he is an embarrassment. It is much easier to deal with the Source of being and with the Spirit than with one whom the Church insists on calling not only Jesus but also Messiah and even son of God.

These are writers well known in the West. And a consequence of their influence is that one can get the impression - certainly in western bookshops and libraries - that the consensus theology of the World Church (if there is such a thing) is moving in this direction - the direction of "whole world ecumenism" or wider ecumenism". The matter was hotly debated at the 1991 Canberra assembly in connection with the work of the Korean theologian Dr. Chung Hyun Kyung.

### **A coming world faith?**

What are or should be, the limiting factors in our dialogue with people of other faith? There is pressure, from writers like Wilfred Cantwell Smith, John Hick and others, to urge us towards a single "coming world faith". It is an ideal which sits well with Advaita Vedanta as well as with Gandhiji's belief in the equality of all religions. I have real problems with this scenario; because, whoever its advocates are, they seem to end up by weakening the Christian

commitment to Jesus Christ. He is undoubtedly the offence, the scandal, as he himself predicted (Mt 26: 31). Yet by definition we are christians. Remove that central affirmation, and we become simply theists, and there is no further possibility of Hindu - Christian dialogue.

Does this then mean that we cannot honestly enter dialogue? or that if we do use dialogue, it becomes simply an instrument of proselytism? I do not believe so. We are rightly committed to full cooperation with our colleagues of other faith in work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. I like to call that enterprise *syndiakonia* - service that we carry out together. But we are also as Abhishiktananda constantly stressed - committed to sharing with our dialogue partners the deepest things of our faith, "In the cave of the heart"; and to do so without reserve believing that if God were to call us to move beyond our present faith, then we should follow God, who is truth.

As christians both as individuals and as *koinonia* - we enter this dialogue as people who through Christ have received forgiveness, who are living in Christ, who are constantly nurtured by Word and sacrament, who are living as new creatures, and looking forward to God's kingdom. It is only as such people, living in such a relationship with God, that we take part in dialogue. And that implies the essential

participation in dialogue of the church as well as the individual theologian.

What I am saying is that the language of the Church's life - the language of the bible and the liturgy - must ultimately control our theology, rather than the flattened demythologised language of a hypothetical world-faith. The Church's life and faith should no longer be an alien culture. So I must admit that I become uneasy when I hear Dr. Aleaz say that the Indian context can "contribute to the very substance of Christian faith". It can certainly explain that substance, in a way that is different from the explanation given in other cultures. That is what hermeneutics are for. But there is a givenness about the Biblical account of the good news which cannot be replaced : the substance of the gospel is an irreplaceable person. Indian theology may of course, as Chehchiah said, bring our hitherto unknown features of Jesus' portrait. I do not believe that it is our task to postulate a coming world faith where all the differences will be overcome. It is for us to live in Christ, and to share Christ's story with all who are happy to listen to us, since everyone has a right to hear the gospel. And we are entitled to invite others to join us in this adventure, which we have found to be the best thing in the world. Yes, we are also called to listen to the corresponding witness of our dialogue partners, in love and honesty. What happens next is the work of the Spirit.

## The danger of total cultural identification

In our witness to those outside the Church - and I agree with Lesslie Newbigin's conviction 'that the toughest field of the Church's mission today is secularized western society, Schleiermacher's "cultured despisers of religion" - we must be prepared to use an appropriate, culture specific language and hermeneutic. Yet such language must spring from a firm foundation in the Christian koinonia; and it must be an explication of the cultural - linguistic environment of the Bible and the "great tradition" of the Church. If it is not, then one day the stream of Christian life in our community may well run out into the sand and disappear.

Let me give a specific illustration. Some of us here are old enough to have been a part of the Student Christian movement - the SCM. M.M. Thomas served on its staff; so did C.S.Paul : so did Lesslie Newbigin; so-in Australia, Britain and Ireland-did my wife and I, and many more. Our debt to its openness, its Bible study, its prayer life, its socio-political commitment, is immense. But in the 1970s and I speak here of what happened in Britain, Australia and the USA - the movement decided that the "secular gospel" required total identification with the world. In a way that was admirable. But the carefully nurtured links with the historic Church were weakened; and before anyone

realized what was happening, the movement itself had virtually disappeared. And the universities - and the Church - were deprived of that radical, questioning political christian presence to their great loss.

Let us not weep for the SCM - a great and significant movement of its time, with a secure place in the history of the Christian Church, and still hopefully - with a renewed future before it but let us be sure that the Church itself, in its desire to serve the culture, does not lose its language, and with its language, its worship, and with its worship its message the subject of that message - Jesus Christ.

## Liberals and Evangelicals

My recalling of the SCM necessarily reminds us of one of the conflicts which is causing great damage to the Church all over the world, and most certainly in India. We Christians have always been far too ready to unchurch one another. That is why the example of Christian unity which you in India pioneered-in both the CSI and the CNI - is so important. In my present work for Christian unity in Australia we were aware that one of our most difficult tasks is to ensure the continuation of fellowship between people who prefer to call themselves evangelicals, and those who might be called, be they old term liberal, or ecumenical, or conciliar (David Bosch). You in India - especially in the CSI and CNI have gone a long way towards removing the

denominational differences which you inherited from the western churches of the Reformation. You are also engaged in on going dialogue between those traditions and the orthodox and the Roman Catholic traditions. But the tension between the liberal and evangelical is greater than ever, and can be felt in many areas; perhaps above all in matters related to gender, whether it be with reference to women in the ministry or to the place of homosexuals in the church.

Where do we set the limits of fellowship in the church? We often quote Paul's liberal attitude to the gentile christians whom the Judaizers wanted to circumcise. Paul fought for and won their right to be liberated from circumcision. But he also upheld the conservative right of those who wished to continue circumcision. He left room in the church for a wide variety of practice and belief, provided the centre held firm. And the centre was the commitment to live in Christ both as individuals and as church.

Here is an area where perhaps you can once again show the way. And I am aware that both the CSI and the CNI are churches where this tension is "contained" in a way that can be both positive and fruitful. I would hope for the continuation and development of friendly yet theologically rigorous dialogue between evangelical and ecumenical theologies in India, freed, so far as possible, from outside pressure in either pluralist or a fundamentalist direction.

## CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA - REVISION OF CONSTITUTION

### A Comment by J. Russell Chandran

Prof. George Koshy, the former general Secretary of the Church of South India Synod, deserves our gratitude for his interpretation of the proposed revision of the CSI constitution, in the January-February 1999 number of the South India Churchman. He has drawn attention to an important addition to the document, namely, a chapter on the Mission of the Church. He observes that this statement on mission "is a very balanced document that will, it is hoped, be a proper guide to the church and its members in their attempt to be true witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ".

In the section on episcopacy it is pointed out that the synod has decided to raise the minimum age of bishops from forty five to fifty. This, I would like to point out, is a retrograde step. What is called for is not to increase the minimum age but to restore the minimum age to thirty, which was the minimum age from ancient times. Some of the most dynamic bishops in the history of the church were those who were chosen as bishops when they were just thirty years

or only a little older. The decision to increase the minimum age exposes a lack of faith in God's grace to empower those he calls for his ministry in the church.

The concern appears to be that a person who is chosen for the bishop's office may continue too long. The suggestion that no one should be bishop for more than 10 years is quite reasonable. After the ten year period as bishop a person may be required to retire from the Episcopal office and be assigned a pastoral or any other form of ministry for which he /she is qualified.

It is also important to recognise that, even while continuing as an autonomous church, the CSI has been a constituent of the Joint Council of the CNI-CSI-Marthoma, and prayers are offered in the liturgies of the three churches for the heads of the three churches. This needs to be explicitly mentioned in the constitutions of the three churches. One problem has been that the section entitled "the Governing Principles of the

Church" is not included in the Diocesan constitutions. This situation needs to be remedied so that members of the dioceses also become aware of the heritage of the church to which they belong.

One unfortunate thing is that the decision that a name has to be adopted for the one church in which the three churches, the CNI, the CSI and the Mar Thoma belong together has not yet been implemented. This is largely due to the fear of the Mar Thoma that they may lose their Mar Thoma or Syrian identity. It is not proper to continue indefinitely without a name. The church of India will be a suitable name for the one church, carrying the tradition of the CNI and the CSI. In fact there was an understanding between the CSI and the CNI that they would come together as the Church of India. If the Mar Thoma Church continues to have reservations about adopting a new name the CSI and the CNI should go ahead and adopt a name giving freedom to the Mar Thoma to join later if they so desired.

### DEATH

With profound sorrow we record the sudden and untimely death of the wife of Madurai-Ramnad diocese bisop the Rt.Rev. Thavaraj David and her foster daughter and their driver in a car accident in Madurai on 19-4-1999. We convey our heart-felt condolences to the bereaved bishop. The General Secretary Rev.G.Dyvasirvadam and the Hon. Treasurer Mr.Frederick William attended the funeral service representing the CSI Synod. May the Lord's presence comfort him and grant the departed soul eternal peace.

### Kingdom Defined

*Power in complete subordination to love - that is someting like a definition of the Kingdom of God.*  
- William Temple

*In Christ's word, in His works, and in His presence this kingdom reveals itself to men.*  
- Second Vatican Council

# HOLY LAND - A LAND OF HOPE

Rev. G. Devakadasham\*

The land of Israel is located at the extreme eastern end of the Mediterranean. It is surrounded by Lebanon on the North, Syria and Jordan on the East and on the South by the Sinai Desert. Its land size is 14,000 Sq. miles. This land is the birth place of three major monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. For the Jews, this is the land of the Law and Prophets and their past glories; to the Christian, this is the land where Jesus lived and suffered and to the Muslims, this is the land where the prophet ascended to heaven.

The population of Israel consists of the Jews and the Arabs. It is a land of war all through its history. This land of faith and love has also been a land of wars, blood and misery. Three major religions, viz., Judaism, Islam and Christianity are practised in this land. Christians form about 10% of the total population. Due to the insecurity around them, three years of military service is compulsory for all the youth, both male and female. In addition to this, every year, one has to give one month for defence service till the age of 60.

The churches of the holy sites in Israel had been brought down

many times. The present structures are the latest ones, constructed during the last few centuries. The early churches were the Byzantine churches destroyed by the Muslim and Persian invaders. In 1099 AD



the crusaders captured Jerusalem and established the Latin kingdom there. After the victory of the crusaders they built up all the destroyed churches. Later, during the Persians occupation of Palestine, once again the churches were brought down.

Thanks to the archeological excavation made during the last few years, most of the Biblical sites have been brought to light. The Bible becomes a living book in the light of the excavations. A closer study of the archeology

in Israel is necessary to understand clearly the Biblical traditions.

Similar to the religious traditions of Israel, the church traditions are also diverse.

Roman Catholics form the biggest denomination in Israel. The Franciscan monks play a lead role in excavating the holy sites and maintain them for the generations to come. The Greek Orthodox has a good worshipping community, followed by the Armenian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox and the Episcopalian and the Evangelicals. Different church groups co-operate with each other in concerns of common interest. Though the Jews are very strict in their religious observances and avoidance of the infiltration of the christian elements into their community, an estimated number of 6000 secret Jewish christians are there.

The Holy Land prepares to receive the new millennium. Hotels will be booked before the end of this year. An estimated number of 3 million people are expected to visit it in 2000. Many hotels are under construction. The nation of Israel prepares to celebrate the 2000 birthday of the Lord of the

\* Director, Pastoral Aid Department, CSI Synod

Universe in a commercial way. But the faith community should look at this land as a sign of hope. When Christ was born 2000 years ago in Bethlehem, his star appeared to give direction to the confused wisemen. A couple of months back, two special stars appeared

in the sky near the same Bethlehem. The Scientists watched it through the telescopes, which was published in the national media of Israel and in the International media.

This land torn by wars in the past, now very much realises the necessity of peace. A visit to

the Holy Land should not be only a pilgrimage to collect some soil from Jerusalem, water from Jordan, sometimes baptism in Jordan and few souvenirs. Rather, it should be a study, reflection, transformation and transparency and an opportunity to get back the lost hope. \*

## MISSION EDUCATION SCHOOL

B.D. *Prasada Rao*

The second Mission Education School was organised by the CWM in Kuruman, South Africa from the 15<sup>th</sup> February to 5<sup>th</sup> March 1999. Rev. B.D. Prasada Rao, Director, Christian Education Department of CSI was one of the 21 participants from different constituent churches of CWM. Rev. Steve De Gruchi, Director of

Kuruman Moffat Mission Centre and Rev. Lawrence, Principal of Kalahari Desert Theological Seminary were the organisers and hosts of the School under the leadership of Miss Francis.

Contemporary challenges of the Church in different cultures of the world were analysed and relevant mission strategies were discussed. The patterns of Christian Education in the ensuing millennium were discussed. Participants were enlightened about how the mission takes different shapes in different cultures of the world. Mission

issues and challenges like multi faith context, gender sensitivity,



community development, indigenisation, parochial tendencies of christian communities, shifts in mission paradigms, rural methods, dynamics of adult Christian education and so on were compared and contrasted.

Rev. B.D. Prasada Rao presented a case study on holistic congregational education model of ICUC. He also presented a paper on "Children in Mission – a Theological Exploration", which depict the optional models of christian care for the clusters of children who are ostracised in Indian communities.

Field trips and "mission meditations" helped the participants to understand the indefatigable services of missionaries like Robert Haffat, David Livingstone, Mary Moffat, Hamilton and so on for the spiritual emancipation of Botswana communities of South Africa.

The unresolved consequences of apartheid, birth pangs of stable republic systems of local governments, monstrous rate of AIDS percentage, devastating eruption of uncontrollable crime, uncared "black spot" settlements, irrelevant land-reforms, free style growth of gang rapes, wild-spread fears of theft and so on were the contextual concerns of the Mission School.

Recommendations were submitted to the CWM for Regional and national level organisation of Mission Education School Programmes. \*

## ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN!

I like St. Thomas not because the legends and tradition tell us he came to India in the first century and evangelized our country and was martyred in a hillock near Madras and therefore known as the apostle of India. He was a sceptic and therefore a typical representative of modern people like you and me who will never accept anything unless we have concrete proof which we can see and touch and feel. It is unimaginable how he could have anticipated us all two millenia ago when he made that sceptical statement which invited a classic reply of the resurrected Lord "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

And he had solid reasons to be sceptical. He encountered an impossible situation that flew in the face of reason and realism: Death conquered; the grave vanquished! Sounds nice to hear but how is it possible? He had seen Lazarus being raised to life but he still seemed to have the marks of mortality about him and *this* triumph seemed to have a decisive and qualitative difference about it! Being all too human like us all he expressed his scepticism so emphatically! But do you notice this, once convinced he also came out with a classic affirmation of faith saying, 'my Lord, my God!' (John 20:28) a sceptic turned a

believer!

Down the ages many have grappled with this unbelievable phenomenon of resurrection trying to grasp what could have happened that glorious Easter morn when despair gave way to hope, when doubt gave way to conviction and conviction led to decisive action!

There are those who think it was a case of hallucination, imagining things that have no real basis; but individual hallucination is possible and not *mass* hallucination! There are those who think that his body must have been stolen and hidden and his disciples then claimed he was risen from the dead! This would mean it was a deliberate lie and no religion could be created out of a deliberate deception! Or the Jews themselves could have produced the body or given some convincing evidence of the theft of the body to put an end to this misadventure! There are those who sought to explain this as an instance of resuscitation that he recovered from his swoon and somehow escaped! This again doesn't solve the problem it tries to answer for certainly when his body was prepared for burial even a flickering sign of life would have been noticed! There is also another theory of mistaken identity of the tomb, that the disciples and the women went

to the wrong tomb in the misty morning and finding it empty went round spreading the news He was risen!

But none of these can explain the reality of the existence of the Church down the centuries, of cowards becoming heroes and martyrs, of sceptics becoming believing devotees unless there was the resurrection in between. If there is one basis, one foundation on which the Church stands it is the resurrection. Thus Christ becomes the first-fruits of the new creation the consummation of which is yet to be seen at the end of times!

I asked a friend what she thought about the resurrection. Without any hesitation she said, 'I don't think it was an isolated event which happened years ago; it is a daily occurrence. When I repent for the wrongs I have done and resolve to change, I die and rise again! Resurrection is not something that I look forward to at the end of times. It is something I live with everyday of my life!' Subjective though the interpretation was I could not but be impressed by the ingenuity and integrity of this approach. Certainly this does not deny the objectivity of its occurrence. I was again face to face with another reality of resurrection in our lives!

- Rev. G. Devakadasham

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Entrance Tests and Interview will be held on 17-18 June 1999 at Union Biblical Seminary, Pune. Selected candidates should be willing to join immediately.

### HOLY LAND STUDY TOUR PROGRAMME

The Pastoral Aid Department organised a 14 day Holy Land Study tour from February 27<sup>th</sup> to March 13<sup>th</sup> 1999. The group consisted of 16 pastors, the General Secretary of Women's Fellowship, 2 synod staff, 4 CCC YC Workers and 4 lay members plus the director of PAD. We spent 3 nights in Cairo, visiting the ancient monuments of Egypt like the Pyramids, Sphinx and the Cairo Museum. The team started the Bible tour on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March from Taba (transit point between Egypt and Israel) which ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1999. Rev. Dr. Kamal Farah, an Anglican priest of the diocese of Jerusalem guided the team through his bible studies.

We spent 5 nights in Bethlehem, the birthplace of our

Lord, discovering the traditionally important sites. We started our day at 7.30 a.m. in the morning with breakfast and closed around 9.30 p.m. the time to share and pray together.

We started our study with our visit to Mount Moriah and then through the following Biblical sites – Bethsaida Pool, Antonia fort, Basilica of Resurrection (Holy Sepulchre), Mount of Olives, Golden Gate, Gethsamane, Valley of dry bones, Caipha's house, Upper room, Church of Nativity, Shepherd's Field and the garden tomb.

The second part of our tour was centered around Nazareth. We travelled from Jerusalem to Jericho visiting on the way, Lazarus's tomb, Qumran caves,

Dead Sea, Emmaus, Jaffa, Kaihfa, Mount Carmel, Tiberian (Ganesaret, Sea of Galilee), Capernaum, Bannias, Golan Heights, Basilica of Annunciation, Cana, Mount Tabore and river Jordan. The team had the privilege of staying in the traditional house of holy family in Nazareth. The team members enjoyed the trip both physically and spiritually. The cooperation of the participants was commendable.

The Officers of the Synod, the Synod Executive Committee and the Ministerial Committee deserve to be complimented for encouraging and supporting this programme. The experience of the pastors who participated in the Holy Land Study Tour will be a source of enlightenment to their congregations at large.

### MISSION AMONG TRIBALS - KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE

Realising the importance of mission among tribals, the Department of Mission and Evangelism is encouraging and equipping the local and Diocesan Mission Boards so that they can actively take part in this special ministry.

A two day Seminar was conducted at Warangal on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of December 1998 for Pastors, Catechists and Evangelists and those who are actively involved

in mission among tribals. About 70 participated in this seminar.

highlighted and shared with other dioceses.



The new model for mission existing in these areas were

With the help of the Rt. Rev. S. J. Theodore and Prof. Amrutha Rao from Karimnagar Diocese, the Director had the opportunity to visit some of the interior tribal areas near Warangal. Local congregations were motivated and encouraged to take part in this special ministry. \*

# HEALING MINISTRY WEEK 1999 - A REPORT

*Dr.B. Wesley\**

This year the Healing Ministry Week was observed from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1999 which was jointly organised by the Arogyavaram Medical Centre, Arogyavaram and by the local church, St. Luke's Church, Arogyavaram. The theme for this year is "Created in the Image of God". Every morning there was devotion at the AMC Chapel. In this, Pastors from Arogyavaram and Madanapalle division of Rayalaseema Diocese led the morning Bible Studies based on that day's theme. The following themes were meditated on these devotions

1. Created in the Image of God
2. Created to be unique
3. Reflects wholeness in man
4. Our restoration in Christ
5. Symbolises dignity of human life
6. Makes us stewards of His creation

God spoke to many specifically about the purpose of being created in His image. In the evenings there were visits to the sick and the aged in the local congregation, patients in the wards, disabled (differently abled) children in different hostels at Arogyavaram and also at nearby town and shared the good

news that all are created in the image of God.

We conducted a one day Workshop on 10<sup>th</sup> February for the health workers, medical officers, senior pastors and lay leaders of the CSI Rayalaseema Diocese. This workshop was organised to emphasize the role of the church as a whole in healing ministry.



*The General Secretary, Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam inaugurating the workshop during CMAI Healing Ministry Week, 1999 at AMC, Arogyavaram.*

Mainly staff and students from 3 main hospitals of the diocese participated in this workshop. The General Secretary, Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam inaugurated the workshop. Rev. Prem Kumar Daniel, one of the senior Presbyters of the Diocese was the chairperson of the inaugural session. Rev. Dyvasirvadam spoke on "The people of the Gospel" and challenged the gathering that it is the neglected and the so called low caste group of the society that needed healing. His inaugural address enabled the participants to rededicate themselves to the service of the poor.

There were reports from the three medical institutions, which

highlighted the holistic approach of the healing ministry. Dr. B. Wesley, the Director, AMC presented a paper on "Healing Ministry of the Church" which called the local church to participate in the healing ministry, followed by a presentation by AMC Chaplain about the spiritual activities of healing ministry in Arogyavaram Medical Centre.

We also had a special session to pray for CMAI on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 1999, the CMAI prayer day, during this workshop. In this special session brief report about Aims, Objectives and activities of CMAI were presented.

On 14<sup>th</sup> February 1999 Healing Ministry Sunday was observed. A procession was organised from AMC Chapel to the local church and the staff led the service in the local church in which the Nursing Superintendent of AMC shared the word of God. The Director, AMC was the special speaker at Madanapalle town Church in this Healing Ministry Sunday. In the evening service in English, the Chaplain preached.

Thus the Healing Ministry Week 1999 was an eye opener to many to understand the need of "Healing" in the context of being "Created in God's Image".

\* Dr. B. Wesley is the director of the AMC, Arogyavaram

## MISSION PARADIGM IN RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

*Rev. Dr. W.S. Milton Jeganathan\**

The synod level consultation on 'Mission Paradigm in Religious Pluralism' was arranged on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1999 at the CSI Centre, Chennai. The focus of this consultation was towards religious pluralism and the future of mission in the Indian context today. About 80 participated in this consultation which includes representatives from the dioceses and mission board secretaries. Dr. K. Rajaratnam, President, NCCI delivered the keynote address and Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam, General Secretary, CSI delivered the inaugural address. Mr. Frederick William, treasurer of the CSI, conveyed his greetings in the inaugural session.

Two Bible studies were conducted by Dr. Rajendran, Associate General Secretary, India Missions Association (IMA), Mr. James Kaiser Hosannah, Ministry Secretary, IMA conducted the worship services on these two days.

The resource persons presented papers in 'Religious Pluralism and the future of Mission in the Indian Context Today', in various dimensions like, theological,

were presented on lay and feminist perspectives. The Rt. Rev. Dr. P. Victor Premasagar, former Moderator, CSI, Rev. Dr. J.T.K. Daniel, former Principal, Serampore College, Dr. W. A. F. Hopper, Development Education Consultant and former Director, Council for Education, CSI Synod, Dr. Jayakaran Isaac, Principal, Voorhees

College, Vellore, Dr. Mrs. Pauline Sathyamurthy, Professor, Bishop Heber College, Trichy, Mr. Ebenezer Sunder Raj, General Secretary, IMA and Dr. Abraham Atyal, Professor and Head of Department of Mission Ecumenics and Dialogue, Gurukul Theological Seminary were among the Resource persons and they presented papers at this consultation. Rev. Dr. Franklin Balasundaram and

Rev. Dr. Lalsankima Pachauau, U T C, Bangalore, were not able to attend this consultation but their papers were presented in their absence.

During the group discussion and plenary sessions it was emphasized

to formulate new models and strategies in the context of mission considering the present socio-political religious situations prevailing in India today.



biblical, educational, ecumenical, cultural, historical and missiological perspectives. Moreover, the papers

It is to be noted here that this is the first time the mission board secretaries and church leaders came together to evaluate the whole process and activities of the Missionary task and put forward new models to meet the challenges of the contemporary society particularly in the midst of religious pluralism.

Among various recommendations the participants felt the urgency and need for establishing dialogue centres (with other faiths) at the Diocesan level. Moreover, it was highly recommended to have a Mission Institute at the synod level along with equipping the available local training centres at diocesan level.

In the closing session the Most Rev. William Moses, Moderator of CSI delivered a challenging message and encouraged the participants to take active part in God's mission as we enter into the new millennium particularly in the midst of religious pluralism.

\* He is the director of the Department of Mission and Evangelism, CSI Synod

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# A TRIBUTE TO MRS. DARLING SELVABAI THAVARAJ

- Mrs. J.T.K. Daniel

It is with a heavy heart I write these lines about Darling who had been my dearest friend and sister right from our college days. She was the only daughter of late Mrs. and Rev. Jesudason Samuel who rendered faithful service in Tirunelveli Diocese. Her only younger brother Rev. Victor Rajan is a pastor in Tirunelveli Diocese now. Her schooling was done in Eliot Tucker H.S. School at Megnanapuram and continued her collegiate studies at Sarah Tucker College. She was brought up in the fear of the Lord by her devoted parents and her early commitment to love and serve the Lord Jesus changed her lifestyle. Through her life and witness she led young lives to Christ. She always encouraged group prayer and was a leader for the College Evangelistic Team which regularly visited nearby villages and shared the love of Christ through word and deed. Her concern for the underprivileged was sincere. Her genuine love for others won the love and admiration of both the staff and the students of the College. Later I had the privilege to work as her colleague at St. Johns a Nazareth. She was not only a good teacher but a friend available to help the sick, the weak and the poor at anytime.

She was the darling of her parents, a darling sister to Victor Rajan, a caring member to her family and a loving and faithful

per the Biblical norm that "the left hand should not know what the right hand does."

Her life of service was a response for the deep love and unflinching faith she had in her Master and Lord Jesus. Through her labour of love she had brought many to the knowledge and love of Christ. She will be remembered for her selfless and sacrificial life. Words fail to bring out the Godgiven qualities of this His faithful servant. As pastor's and Bishop's wife she carried out her responsibilities in a humble and unassuming way. She stood with the Bishop through thick and thin supporting him in all His activities. The friends of Madurai Diocese will bear witness to what I have said. May the Risen Lord Jesus comfort and strengthen the Bishop and his family and the Diocese at this time of irreparable loss.



life-partner to dear Bishop Thavaraj. God was using her in Madurai in different capacities among women and children. She had helped many marginalised, neglected and deserted women to come up in life. She spent from her personal resources joyfully for their upliftment. Her genuine love for God and people made her go a second mile to help those in need. Many had benefited from her benevolence. She spent her time in building up people. She loved anyone in need and lent a helping hand to the needy as

## Dear Pastors

Do you know that our CSI family has more than 2000 pastors? If only each of you manage to get just 5 subscriptions for the South India Churchman, the official organ of your church that would mean more than 10,000 subscriptions!

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## RURAL WOMEN CELEBRATE TOGETHER

Whenever a synod level youth meeting took place, it was invariably the city youngsters who participated in large numbers. The young women in the rural hamlets never, ever, got an opportunity to come out of the church. It was in mind that a Women's conference organised at Kurnool 14th of March 1999, from 12th to 180 young girls from the six dioceses of Andhra Pradesh along with spouses of the other regions. The participants were in upbeat mood because it was for the first time many of them got to know about people and the church outside their small villages. They enjoyed their togetherness, singing and dancing. Bishop G.T. Abraham and Mrs. Saraswathy Abraham of the Nandyal dioceses who hosted this meeting did their best in providing meticulous amenities for the participants. The Resource persons included Mrs. Sarojini Ryder Devapriam, wife of the late Moderator, The Most Rev. Ryder Devapriam, Dr. Mrs. Mary Manjulavani, Mrs. Rajkumari Wilson, Mr. Sampath Kumar and Mrs. Ramani Dyvasirvadam among others. All the participants were also given a saree each through the goodwill of a benefactor of the diocese.



It was indeed a meaningful coming together of rural energy that if we are able to properly channelise it, it could turn out to be the strongest spiritual resource of the Church of South India.

### KARNATAKA YOUTH ASSEMBLY

The Karnataka Youth Conference was held at 'Sahodaya' Centre, Balmatta, Mangalore, from 5th to 7th of March 1999 with the theme 'STAY WITH US O LORD'. The youngsters who participated enjoyed the fellowship, bible

studies, cultural evening and much more than that, the opportunity of coming to know each other. The resource persons of this conference included



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*Synod Youth Secretary*